Environmental Assessment

TEAKETTLE FISHING ACCESS SITE
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT

MAY 2015

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Teakettle Fishing Access Site
Proposed Improvement Project
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of proposed state action:

The 3-acre Teakettle Fishing Access Site (FAS) has been a popular recreational site since its acquisition by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) in 1975. The FAS is located along the Flathead River and provides quality recreational opportunities for fishing, boating, floating, picnicking, and wildlife viewing. FWP proposes to expand and improve the parking areas, develop a new drive lane, install barrier rock to control vehicle movement, and repair existing boundary fencing.

2. Agency authority for the proposed action:

The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted Section 87-1-605, Montana Code Annotated (MCA), which authorizes the collection of fees and charges for the use of fishing access sites, directs FWP to acquire develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature earmarked a funding account to ensure that the fishing access site program would be implemented. Section 87-1-303, MCA, contains rule-making authority for their use, occupancy, and protection. Furthermore, Section 23-1-110, MCA, and Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 12.2.433 guide public involvement and comment for the improvements at state parks and fishing access sites, which this document provides.

ARM 12.8.602 requires the Department to consider the wishes of the public, the capacity of the site for development, environmental impacts, long-range maintenance, protection of natural features, and impacts on tourism, as these elements relate to development or improvement to fishing access sites or state parks. This document will illuminate the facets of the proposed action in relation to this rule. See Appendix A for HB 495 qualification.

3. Name of project:

Teakettle Fishing Access Site Proposed Improvement Project

4. Project sponsor:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 1
490 N Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

5. Anticipated Schedule:

Estimated Public Comment Period: May/June 2015
Estimated Decision Notice: June 2015
Estimated Commencement Date: Fall 2015
Estimated Completion Date: Fall 2015
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 35%

6. Location:

Teakettle FAS is located along the Flathead River in the town of Columbia Falls on Highway 2 in Flathead County. The land is located in Section 16, Township 30 North, Range 20 West (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. General Location of Teakettle FAS.

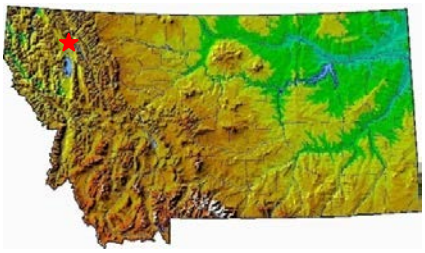


Figure 2. Highway Location and Parcel Map of Teakettle FAS.

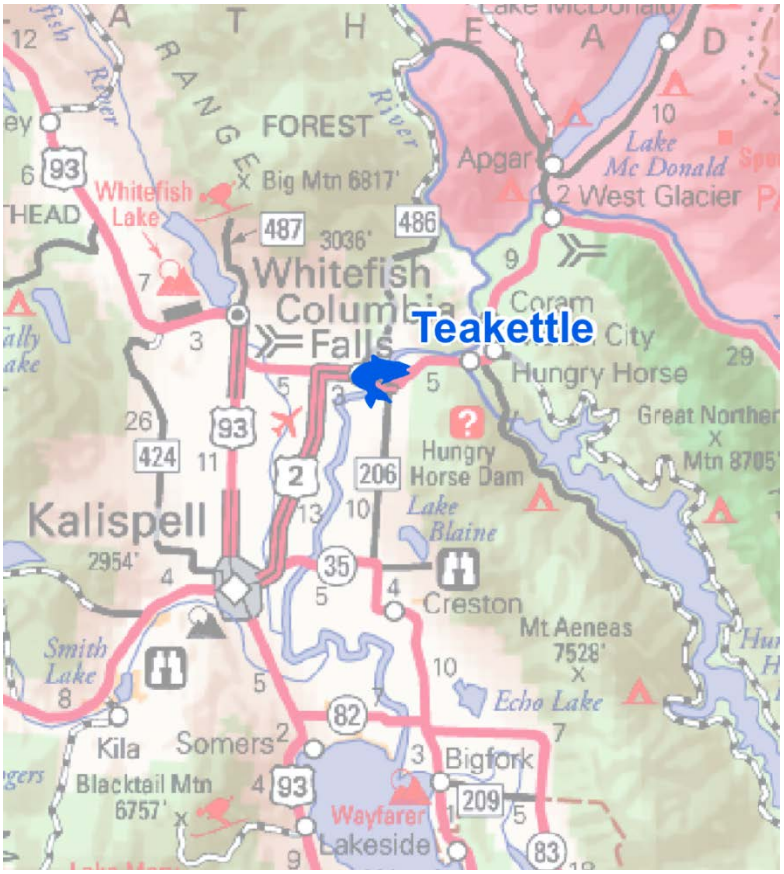
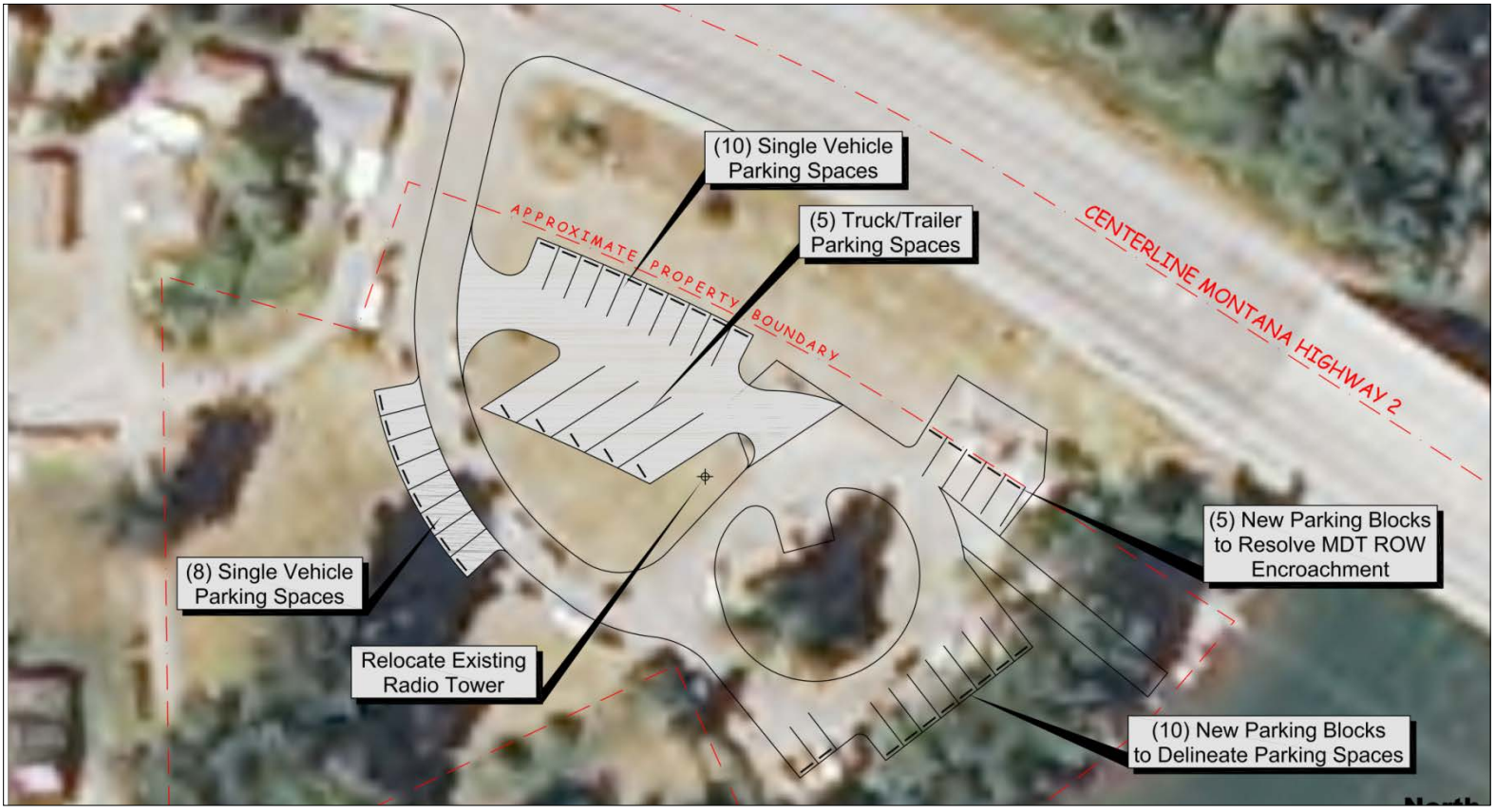


Photo 1. Aerial View Showing Heavy Use of Teakettle FAS in July 2013.

Figure 3. Teakettle FAS Proposed Improvement Preliminary Concept Site Plan.



7. Project size:

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	0
Residential	0		
Industrial	0	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	0
(b) Open Space/	2	Dry cropland	0
Woodlands/Recreation		Forestry	0
(c) Wetlands/Riparian	0	Rangeland	0
Areas		Other	0

8. Permits, funding & overlapping jurisdiction:

(a) Permits: Permits would be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.

Agency Name	Permits
City of Columbia Falls	Floodplain and Sanitation Permit

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Site Protection Fund	$ 9,250
Federal Wallop-Breaux Fund	$27,750
Total	$37,000

(c) Other overlapping or additional jurisdictional responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Montana Natural Heritage Program	Species of Concern (Appendix B)
Flathead County Weed District	Weed Management Coordination
State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural Clearance (Appendix E)

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action:

The Flathead River represents the combined flow of hundreds of headwater creeks funneled from Montana, Canada, and the glacial cirques of Glacier National Park. This cold, clear water flows into the North, South, and Middle Forks of the Flathead, which merge together near Columbia Falls, to begin a southward journey. Portions of the upper mainstem Flathead River are classified as “Recreational” within the Wild and Scenic River Classification system. About 20 miles into its journey, after flowing down the gentle, south-sloping gradient of the Flathead Basin floor, the river empties into Flathead Lake. The lower mainstem Flathead River drains from the southwest corner of the lake and draws waters from an arid valley basin throughout its 75-mile course. The Flathead River finally empties into the Clark Fork River at Paradise. The Flathead River system offers hundreds of miles of pristine waterways, while Flathead Lake is a popular scenic and recreational destination. A diversity of fish and wildlife complement the land and water resources, and contribute to both the natural and cultural values of the Flathead Basin environment. Today the river is also important for recreational use along its entire length through Montana and is heavily used for boating, floating, fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking, and picnicking.

Teakettle FAS is located on the Flathead River 14 miles downstream of the confluence of the North Fork and Middle Fork of the Flathead River. The Flathead River is open for fishing the third Saturday in May to November 30, except for an extended season for whitefish, lake trout, and northern pike, and catch and release for trout from December 1

through the 3rd Saturday in May. According to recent surveys by FWP, the average angler days per year from 2005 to 2011 on the 53-mile stretch from Flathead Lake (river mile 105) to North Fork Flathead River (river mile 158) was 34,507, with a low of 29,814 in 2007 and a high of 42,903 in 2009. The regional ranking for this stretch of river averaged the second most fished body of water for the same period, and the state ranking for this stretch of river averaged the 17th most fished body of water in Montana out of more than 1,400 stream reaches, lakes, or reservoirs that were surveyed within the state. Teakettle FAS (river mile 144) is one of seven fishing access sites managed by FWP on the Flathead River. The closest FAS to Teakettle FAS is Kokanee Bend (river mile 141) and a U.S. Forest Service (USFS) access three miles upstream (river mile 147). Both outfitters and the general public frequently use Teakettle FAS as a put-in and take-out site for boats and rafts.

Vegetation found on Teakettle FAS is classified as Rocky Mountain Lower Montane and Foothill and Valley Grassland by the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP), with a small area of Northern Rocky Mountain Lower Montane Riparian Woodland and Shrubland along the river. Common plants found on Teakettle FAS include black cottonwood, quaking aspen, Engelmann spruce, chokecherry, Rocky Mountain maple, red-osier dogwood, snowberry, smooth brome, Kentucky bluegrass, and common dandelion.

Common wildlife species found in the vicinity of Teakettle FAS include white-tailed deer, elk, moose, black bear, grizzly bear, mountain lion, red fox, coyote, badger, beaver, northern river otter, American mink, and a variety of small mammals. A wide variety of resident and migratory bird species use or travel through the area on a seasonal basis, including Canada geese, golden eagle, bald eagle, osprey, great horned owl, and a variety of other raptors, waterfowl, and songbirds. Common game fish found in this reach of Flathead River include rainbow trout, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, lake trout, lake whitefish, pygmy whitefish, and mountain whitefish.

A search by the MNHP found that no plant species and two animal species listed as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have been observed within the vicinity of the FAS, including grizzly bear and bull trout. The search indicated that other Montana animal Species of Concern have been observed in the vicinity of the proposed project, including western toad, great blue heron, golden eagle, westslope cutthroat trout, pygmy whitefish, little brown myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat, fisher, and bat roost. A search by the MNHP found that nine Montana plant Species of Concern have been observed within the vicinity of the proposed project, including aloina moss, amblyodon moss, callicladium moss, black golf club moss, latah tule pea, northern buttercup, deer Indian paintbrush, small yellow lady's-slipper, and maidenhair spleenwort.

Only primitive parking facilities have been provided at the 3-acre Teakettle FAS since its acquisition in1975. Conditions at this site reflect decades of continuous heavy use and can be characterized by insufficient parking causing visitors to park along the access road, creating safety hazards and nuisance to neighbors (Photo 1); random vehicle parking often blocking other vehicles; erosion in and around the undefined parking areas; degraded riparian habitat; and exposed mineral soil. The interior roadway along with the undefined parking areas pose traffic flow problems, insufficient room to maneuver trailers, and, in some instances, hazardous conditions for vehicular movement within the site.

FWP proposes to expand and improve the existing facilities at Teakettle FAS, including: 1) developing designated day-use gravel parking areas to accommodate approximately 33 single vehicles and five truck/trailer vehicles, 2) constructing a new drive lane to

improve traffic flow and vehicle maneuvering through the FAS, 3) installing barrier rocks to control vehicle access, 4) repairing existing boundary fencing, 5) installing directional and informational signs, 6) relocating the existing radio tower, and 7) revegetating areas disturbed during construction (Figure 3). The construction would require the site to be closed to public use for a 30-day period in the late fall. Two nearby accesses would remain open, ensuring public access to the Flathead River.

The property would be managed under existing FWP public use regulations, including routine maintenance, control of vehicles and firearms, and other accepted FWP recreation area management policies. The off-road use of vehicles, hunting, camping, and the discharge of weapons are not allowed on Teakettle FAS. The proposed project would improve recreational opportunities for fishing, boating, floating, picnicking, swimming, and wildlife viewing; would preserve this stretch of riparian and open-space habitat; and would fill a need for recreation opportunities on a very popular stretch of the scenic Flathead River.

10. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action.

If no action were taken and the proposed modifications were not made, with expanded and improved designated parking areas and a new drive lane, parking would continue to be inadequate, causing visitors to park along the access road, creating safety hazards and nuisance to neighbors. Vehicle movement would continue to be difficult and, at times, unsafe, and vehicle parking would continue to be inconvenient and insufficient, with vehicles often blocking other vehicles. Parking on unimproved areas would cause continued disturbance to existing vegetation, and erosion of those surfaces would continue to contribute to river sedimentation. FWP would continue to provide general maintenance to the site and would continue to implement the FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan to control noxious weeds on the property.

Alternative B: Proposed Action.

FWP proposes to improve Teakettle FAS by expanding and improving the existing gravel parking areas with designated parking and a new drive lane, and installing barrier rock, directional and informational signs, and repairing existing boundary fencing. The proposed action would help accommodate the increasing demands on the site from diverse recreational uses and reduce sediment runoff. FWP would continue implementing the FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan to control noxious weeds on the property.

11. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

FWP would employ Best Management Practices (BMP), which are designed to reduce or eliminate sediment delivery to waterways during construction. FWP would develop the final design and specifications for the proposed action. All permits listed in Part I, 8(a), above would be obtained by FWP as required. A private contractor selected through the state's contracting processes would complete the construction.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		Yes	1b.
c. Destruction, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				1c.
d. Changes in siltation, deposition, or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			X		Yes Positive	1d.
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				

1a. The proposed action would not affect existing soil patterns, structures, productivity, fertility, or instability. Soil and geologic substructure would remain stable during and after the proposed work.

1b. During construction, some minor modifications to the existing soil features would be required for the construction of the parking areas. Disturbed areas would be seeded with a native seed mix to minimize erosion, sediment delivery to the Flathead River, and the spread of noxious weeds. The FAS is managed for recreation and wildlife habitat and is not under commercial agricultural production. The proposed action would not affect soil productivity or soil fertility. FWP Best Management Practices (BMP) would be followed during all phases of construction to minimize erosion.

1c. No unique geologic or physical features would be altered by the proposed action.

1d. Erosion of the unimproved parking areas is causing sedimentation of the Flathead River in the vicinity of the FAS and degradation of native riparian vegetation on the FAS. The construction of expanded and improved designated parking areas would reduce erosion of those surfaces and reduce sedimentation of the river. Minor amounts of sediment may enter the river during construction of the parking areas. However, upon completion, erosion and sedimentation to the river would be reduced.

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13c.)			X		Yes	2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				2b.
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns, or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regulations? (Also see 2a.)		X				2e.

2a. Dust may be temporarily generated during construction of the expanded parking areas. If additional materials were needed off-site, loading at the source site would generate minor amounts of dust. FWP would follow FWP BMPs during all phases of construction to minimize risks and reduce dust. See Appendix D for the BMPs. There would be a temporary increase in diesel exhaust from equipment used during construction. If the proposed action were implemented, odors from diesel exhaust would dissipate rapidly. These impacts would be short term and minor.

2b. The latrine would continue to be regularly maintained to minimize objectionable odors.

2e. The proposed project would have no impact on air quality in the vicinity of Teakettle FAS and would not result in any discharge that could conflict with federal or state air quality regulations.

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity?			X		Yes	3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		Yes Positive	3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?			X		Yes	3d.
e. Exposure of people or property to water-related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?			X		Yes	3h.
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				3l.
m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)			X		Yes Positive	3m.

3a. Construction of the parking areas may cause a temporary, localized increase in turbidity in the Flathead River. FWP BMPs would be followed during all phases of construction and rehabilitation of the pioneered roads (Appendix D).

3b. Reseeding and replacement of the unimproved parking areas with designated areas would reduce erosion from those surfaces and reduce sedimentation of the river. The proposed action would be designed to minimize any effect on surface water, surface runoff, and drainage patterns. FWP BMPs would be followed (Appendix D) during construction.

3d. There may be a minor, temporary increase of runoff during construction. FWP BMPs would be followed (Appendix D).

3h. The use of heavy equipment during construction may result in a slight risk of contamination from petroleum products and a temporary increase in sediment delivery to the Flathead

River. FWP BMPs would be followed during all phases of construction to minimize these risks (Appendix D).

3l. According to a phone conversation with Eric Mulcahy, the City of Columbia Falls Contractor for Planning Services, on March 3, 2015, a portion of the proposed project site along the Flathead River is located within the 100-year floodplain. The 100-year floodplain is shown on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Map Panel 30029C1435G, effective date September 28, 2007. A Floodplain Permit from the City of Columbia Falls would be obtained to insure that the proposed project would be in compliance with city floodplain regulations.

3m. All impacts to water quality would be temporary, resulting from construction. Localized water quality of the river could improve as a result of the proposed project by reducing sedimentation into the river from surface and riverbank erosion.

4. VEGETATION **Will the proposed action result in?**	**IMPACT**					
	Unknown	**None**	**Minor**	**Potentially Significant**	**Can Impact Be Mitigated**	**Comment Index**
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity, or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		Yes	4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X		Yes	4b.
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4e.
f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?			X		Yes	4f.
g. Other:		X				

4a. The proposed action would have no impact on the plant diversity or productivity of Teakettle FAS and would have a minor impact on plant abundance. A minimal number of trees and shrubs would be removed during construction. Because the construction area is small, impacts from construction would be minor. Any area disturbed during construction would be reseeded with a native seed mix, and construction of the designated parking area would disturb a relatively small area adjacent to the existing parking areas that have been disturbed in the past by construction of Highway 2 and public use of the site. The proposed project would have an overall beneficial impact on the FAS plant communities.

4b. The proposed project would have a minor negative impact, if any, on plant communities found on the FAS. Vegetation found on Teakettle FAS is classified as Rocky Mountain Lower Montane and Foothill and Valley Grassland by the MNHP, with a small area of Northern Rocky Mountain Lower Montane Riparian Woodland and Shrubland along the river. Common plants found on Teakettle FAS include black cottonwood, quaking aspen, Engelmann spruce, chokecherry, Rocky Mountain maple, red-osier dogwood, snowberry,

smooth brome, Kentucky bluegrass, and common dandelion. The most common noxious weeds found on the FAS, as classified by the Montana Department of Agriculture, include Canada thistle and spotted knapweed.

4c. A search by the MNHP found that nine Montana plant Species of Concern have been observed within two miles of Teakettle FAS, including aloina moss, amblyodon moss, callicladium moss, black golf club moss, latah tule pea, northern buttercup, deer Indian paintbrush, small yellow lady's-slipper, and maidenhair spleenwort. The last recorded observation dates of these species in the vicinity of Teakettle FAS are all prior to 1900, so it is unlikely that the proposed project would have any impact on these nine plant Species of Concern.

4d. Because the FAS is not under commercial production, the proposed project would have no impact on the productivity or profitability of agricultural production on the FAS.

4e. Few noxious weeds are found on Teakettle FAS, with Canada thistle and spotted knapweed being the most common of the few noxious weeds found on the site. Soils disturbed during construction could colonize with weeds. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a native reclamation seed mix where necessary to reduce the establishment of weeds. In conjunction with the Flathead County Weed Department, FWP would continue implementing the Statewide Integrated Weed Management Plan using chemical, biological, and mechanical methods to control weeds on the property. Weed management would include the establishment of native vegetation to prevent the spread of weeds. Vehicles would be restricted to the parking areas and access roads, which would be maintained as weed-free, and vehicles would not be allowed on undisturbed areas of the site to minimize the spread of noxious weeds. Weed control costs for Teakettle FAS in 2014 was approximately $500. FWP estimates that weed control will continue to cost approximately $500 per year.

4f. According to a search of the Natural Resource Conservation Service Web Soil Survey on February 26, 2015, the 3-acre Teakettle FAS is classified as Prime Farmland if Irrigated. However, the site has not been under agricultural production since the property was acquired by FWP in 1975, so the proposed project would have no impact on the site's agricultural productivity. A search of the MNHP wetland-mapping program on January 15, 2015, found that there is no wetland located on Teakettle FAS, and approximately one acre of the FAS proposed is classified as a Lotic Riparian Forest. The proposed project has been designed to avoid the riparian forest and would have a minor negative impact, if any, on this area.

5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				5a.
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				5b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				5c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest, or other human activity)?		X				5g.
h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		X				5h.
i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				5i.

5a. In 2012, this stretch of the Flathead River was classified as critical habitat for bull trout, which are listed as threatened by the USFWS. According to Brent Esmoil of the USFWS and Mark Deleray, Region 1 FWP Fisheries manager, the USFWS and FWP do not anticipate adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species or critical habitat resulting from the proposed project location, scope of work, and resulting activities. Teakettle FAS does not provide critical habitat for grizzly bear or any other threatened or endangered wildlife species.

The proposed improvements to Teakettle FAS are also designed to minimize impacts to wildlife habitat. Few trees or shrubs would be removed for construction of the expansion and improvement of the parking areas and drive lane.

5b/5c. Common wildlife species found in the vicinity of Teakettle FAS include white-tailed deer, moose, black bear, mountain lion, beaver, northern river otter, American mink, and a variety of small mammals. A wide variety of resident and migratory bird species use or travel through the area on a seasonal basis, including Canada geese, golden eagle, bald eagle, osprey, great horned owl, great blue heron, and a variety of other raptors, waterfowl, and songbirds. According to Chris Hammond, Region 1 FWP nongame wildlife biologist, the proposed project would have no impact on wildlife or wildlife habitat.

Common game fish found in this reach of Flathead River include rainbow trout, westslope X rainbow trout, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, lake trout, and mountain whitefish. Other fish species found in this reach of the Flathead River include pygmy whitefish, lake whitefish, largescale sucker and slimy sculpin. The proposed project is not expected to have any impact on the aquatic habitat or fish species of the Flathead River.

5f. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) element occurrence database found that no plant species and two animal species listed as threatened or endangered by the USFWS have been observed within the vicinity of the FAS, including grizzly bear and bull trout. The search indicated that other Montana animal Species of Concern have been observed in the vicinity of the proposed project, including western toad, great blue heron, golden eagle, westslope cutthroat trout, pygmy whitefish, little brown myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat, fisher, and bat roost (Appendix B). According to Chris Hammond, bald eagle have also been observed in the vicinity of Teakettle FAS.

According to the search of the MNHP database, grizzly bear have been observed within two miles of the FAS as recently as 2013. However, Teakettle FAS does not provide critical habitat for grizzly bear and, while it is possible for grizzly bear to travel through the vicinity of the project area, none have been sighted in the immediate area of Teakettle FAS. Grizzly bear will not be impacted by the proposed project at the FAS.

In 2012, this stretch of the Flathead River was classified as critical habitat for bull trout, listed as threatened by the USFWS. According to Brent Esmoil of the USFWS and Mark Deleray, Region 1 FWP Fisheries manager, the USFWS and FWP do not anticipate adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species or critical habitat resulting from the proposed project location, scope of work, and resulting activities.

According to Chris Hammond there is one active bald eagle nest approximately ½ mile upstream of Teakettle FAS. While bald eagles were officially delisted in 2007, the USFWS has jurisdiction protecting this species under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Though golden eagle have been observed within two miles of Teakettle FAS as recently as 2009, no golden eagle nests have been identified within ½ mile of the FAS. The *Management Guidelines* of the Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan recommend seasonal restrictions from February 1 through August 15 for construction and maintenance of roads and trails, among other activities, within direct line of sight of an active nest. In addition, in the absence of a visual buffer, there should be a distance buffer of at least 1/4 mile from any construction of infrastructure, such as roads and trails. There should also be a 1/4-mile distance buffer for recreation during the breeding season. Because the bald eagle nest is over 1/4 mile from the construction site and there is a sufficient visual buffer between the nest and FAS, the proposed action would not impact bald eagle nesting. In addition, any increased public use of the FAS would have no or minor impact on bald or golden eagles as they have been accustomed to human activity, such as agriculture, recreation, and residential development, in the area for years.

There are no great blue heron rookeries within several miles of Teakettle FAS, so the proposed action would not affect great blue heron nesting. It is unlikely that the proposed project would have any impact on western toad, little brown myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat, and fisher since they have likely become accustomed to heavy recreational and agricultural use in the area for years. According to Ken Breidinger, FWP Region 1 Fisheries Biologist, westslope cutthroat trout are abundant in the stretch of the Flathead River and pygmy whitefish are rare. Because the stream bank of the Flathead River would not be directly disturbed during construction of the proposed project, it is unlikely that the proposed project would have any effect on westslope cutthroat trout, pygmy whitefish, or the nearby aquatic community. FWP BMPs would be followed to minimize runoff and sedimentation to the river during construction (Appendix D).

According to Kent Laudon, FWP Wolf Management Specialist, Teakettle FAS is within the habitat of the gray wolf and is close to established wolf packs. However, wolves typically do not use the area near Teakettle FAS and, due to the close proximity of the FAS to Highway 2, it is unlikely there would be any issues involving wolves. While it is possible for wolves to travel through the project area, none have been recently sighted in the immediate area of Teakettle FAS. The wolf population in western Montana is strong, and wolves may pass through just about any area, including this site. According to Kent Laudon, FWP has no concerns with this project impacting gray wolves, and no adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposed project on the wolf population.

5g. The proposed project is unlikely to stress or impact fish or wildlife populations in the future since the area is located in an area disturbed by residences, a busy highway, nearby agricultural activity, and heavy recreational use of the FAS and the Flathead River.

5h. A search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) found that no plant species and two animal species listed as threatened or endangered by the USFWS have been observed within the vicinity of the FAS, including grizzly bear and bull trout. The search indicated that other Montana animal Species of Concern have been observed in the vicinity of the proposed project, including western toad, great blue heron, golden eagle, westslope cutthroat trout, pygmy whitefish, little brown myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat, fisher, and bat roost. A search by the MNHP found that nine Montana plant Species of Concern have been observed within the vicinity of the proposed project, including aloina moss, amblyodon moss, callicladium moss, black golf club moss, latah tule pea, northern buttercup, deer Indian paintbrush, small yellow lady's-slipper, and maidenhair spleenwort.

5i. No wildlife species would be imported or exported to the area as a result of the proposed development. This project only involves the improvement of the FAS and will not promote the introduction or spread of invasive species.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		Yes	6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X		Yes	6b.
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				

6a. Construction equipment would cause a temporary, minor increase in noise levels at the project site. Any increase in noise level at the construction site would be short-term and minor.

6b. Teakettle FAS is located within 300 feet of approximately five residences, with over 25 residences within ¼ mile. The minor and temporary increase of noise levels during construction may disturb nearby neighbors and visitors. FWP would follow the guidelines of the good neighbor policy, which would mitigate increased noise levels and would attempt to limit construction to periods of low visitation to minimize disturbance to others.

According to Tony Powell, FWP Region 1 FAS manager, it is unlikely that there would be any increase in visitor use as a result of the improved parking facilities, since the project is designed to provide parking for the level of use the FAS already receives. If there was a minor increase in visitor use resulting from the proposed project, it could increase noise levels and disturb nearby neighbors. The FAS would be managed and regulated to minimize noise disturbance to neighbors.

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				7a.
b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use, the presence of which would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				7d.

7a. Because Teakettle FAS is not under commercial production, the proposed project would have no impact on the productivity or profitability of the FAS.

7d. The proposed project would have no effect on the land uses of nearby private properties.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		Yes	8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X		Yes Positive	8c.
d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a.)			X		Yes	8d.

8a. Physical disturbance of the soil during construction could encourage the establishment of additional noxious weeds on the site. In conjunction with the Flathead County Weed District, FWP would continue implementing an integrated approach to control noxious weeds, as outlined in the FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan. The integrated plan uses a combination of biological, mechanical, and herbicidal treatments to control noxious weeds. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines to minimize the risk of chemical spills or water contamination and would be applied by people trained in safe handling techniques.

There is a minor and temporary risk of fuel or oil from heavy equipment accidently releasing into the river during construction. Contractors would have absorbent materials on-site to minimize any hydrocarbon releases, as well as conduct startup inspection of all hydraulic lines and cylinder seals daily to reduce the potential for a release. FWP would follow Best Management Practices during all phases of construction to minimize risks (Appendix D).

8c. The proposed project would improve public safety by providing expanded and improved parking facilities and improving traffic flow, thereby minimizing vehicle conflicts, congestion, and overflow parking onto neighboring private land.

8d. The use of herbicides to control noxious weeds could result in temporary water contamination from an inadvertent spill. The use of herbicides would be in compliance with application guidelines, outlined in the FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan, to minimize this risk and would be applied by people trained in safe handling techniques.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT**					
	Unknown	**None**	**Minor**	**Potentially Significant**	**Can Impact Be Mitigated**	**Comment Index**
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				9c.
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				9d.
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				9e.

9c. The proposed action may improve recreational use of the area by providing designated parking and improving traffic flow. This would benefit local retail and service businesses (Appendix C - Tourism Report).

9d. There would be no change in commercial use of the site.

9e. The proposed action would have little or no impact on traffic on Highway 2.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				10b.
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. Define projected revenue sources		X				10e.
f. Define projected maintenance costs.		X				10f.

10a. The proposed action would have no impact on public services or utilities. The proposed improvements would require periodic maintenance by FWP and the site would continue to be patrolled by FWP.

10b. The proposed action would have no effect on the local and state tax base and revenue.

10e. Under the proposed action, Teakettle FAS would be operated for day use only. Therefore, no revenue would be generated from camping fees.

10f. Projected annual operating, maintenance, and personnel expense for fiscal year 2015 is estimated to total approximately $2,500.

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				11a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				11b.
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X		Yes Positive	11c.
d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails, or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				11d.

11a/b. The proposed action would not affect the aesthetic values of the FAS. The parking areas are visible from the nearby residences and partially from the Flathead River. The proposed project would expand and improve the existing parking areas and would not affect the aesthetic values of the site.

11b. The site is already developed and the proposed improvements would have no effect on the aesthetic character of the neighborhood or community.

11c. Even though the proposed project was designed to just accommodate the existing levels of use, the proposed action may improve recreational use of the area by improving the public safety of the FAS, expanding and improving parking, and improving traffic flow through the site. This could benefit local retail and service businesses (Appendix C - Tourism Report).

Teakettle FAS would be temporarily closed during construction. Two nearby sites would provide alternative access to the Flathead River during the 30-day construction period. House of Mystery river access site is approximately four miles upstream, and Kokanee Bend Fishing Access Site is approximately three miles downstream. Construction would be scheduled during a low-visitation period in fall 2015.

11d. The South, North, and Middle Forks of the Flathead River are designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers by the National Wild and Scenic System. These reaches of the Flathead River would not be affected by the proposed project. No other designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails, or wilderness areas would be impacted by the proposed improvements.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure, or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		X				12d.

12a/d. An earlier inventory identified no cultural resources on the FAS, and FWP concluded that there is a low likelihood of adverse impacts to cultural resources should the project proceed as proposed. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been consulted and has concurred with FWP recommendations for the project (Appendix E). If cultural materials are discovered during construction, work would cease and SHPO would be contacted for a more in-depth investigation.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard, or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		X				13f.
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				13g.

During construction of the proposed project, there may be minor and temporary impacts to the physical environment, but the impacts would be short-term and the improvements would benefit the community and recreational opportunities over the long term. The proposed action would have no negative cumulative effects on the biological, physical, and human environments. When considered over the long term, the proposed action positively impacts the public's recreational use of Flathead River, an important, popular, and heavily used recreational river.

13f. Teakettle FAS is a very popular and heavily used FAS. The proposed project is designed to improve recreational facilities on the site and is not expected to generate organized opposition or substantial public controversy.

13g. No state or federal permits would be required for construction of the proposed project. A floodplain permit from the City of Columbia Falls will be obtained from Sans Surveying, the Contractor for Planning Services for the city of Columbia Falls.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

During construction of the proposed project, there may be minor and temporary impacts to the physical environment, but the impacts would be short-term and the improvements would benefit the community and recreational opportunities over the long term. The proposed action would have no negative cumulative effects on the biological, physical, and human environments. When considered over the long term, the proposed action positively impacts the public's recreational use of Flathead River, an important, popular, and heavily used recreational river in Montana.

The minor impacts to the environment that were identified in the previous section are small in scale and would not influence the overall environment of the immediate area. The natural environment would continue to provide habitat to transient and permanent wildlife species and would be open to the public for stream access.

The proposed action would not impact the local wildlife species that frequent the property and the project would be designed to avoid conditions that stress wildlife populations. Though grizzly bear, bull trout, western toad, golden eagle, bald eagle, great blue heron, westslope cutthroat trout, pygmy whitefish, little brown myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat, and fisher, Montana Species of Concern, have been observed in the vicinity of the FAS, the proposed project is unlikely to impact these species. These species are likely accustomed to disturbances from recreation, agriculture, and residential development that have occurred in the area for years. Though a bald eagle nest is located approximately ½ mile from the FAS, the proposed project is unlikely to impact bald eagle nesting due to visual buffers that are present between the FAS and nest. While it is possible for wolves to travel through the project area, none have been sighted, and there is no pack located in the area, so it is unlikely that the proposed action would impact gray wolves.

The proposed project is unlikely to impact the nine Montana plant Species of Concern that have been observed within the vicinity of the proposed project, including aloina moss, amblyodon moss, callicladium moss, black golf club moss, latah tule pea, northern buttercup, deer Indian paintbrush, small yellow lady's-slipper, and maidenhair spleenwort, since the last recorded observation dates were prior to 1900.

Soils disturbed during construction could colonize with weeds. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a native reclamation seed mix where necessary to reduce the establishment of weeds. In conjunction with Flathead County Weed Control District, FWP would continue implementing the Statewide Integrated Weed Management Plan using chemical, biological and mechanical methods to control weeds on the property.

The proposed improvements of Teakettle FAS would improve recreational opportunities by improving traffic flow and parking, and reducing erosion and resource degradation from the unimproved parking areas. In addition, the proposed improvements would improve recreational opportunities for fishing, picnicking, swimming, and wildlife viewing on the very popular and scenic Flathead River. The site would be closed for a 30 day period in the late fall to minimize impacts to recreation. Two nearby access sites will remain open providing alternative access to the Flathead River.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public involvement:

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on the Teakettle FAS Proposed Improvement Project, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in *the Daily Inter Lake, Hungry Horse News, and the Helena Independent Record.*
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: *http://fwp.mt.gov.*
- Draft EAs will be available at the FWP Region 1 Headquarters in Kalispell and the FWP State Headquarters in Helena.
- A news release will be prepared and distributed to a standard list of media outlets interested in FWP Region 1 issues.
- Notification of this environmental assessment will be distributed to neighboring landowners and interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed action.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having limited impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

If requested within the comment period, FWP will schedule and conduct a public meeting on this proposed action.

2. Duration of comment period:

The public comment period will extend for (30) thirty days. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., June 12, 2014, and can be e-mailed to Tony Powell at tpowell@mt.gov or mailed to the address below:

Teakettle Fishing Access Site Proposed Improvement Project
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 1
490 N Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? No, based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis. In determining the significance of the impacts, FWP assessed the severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the impact, the probability that the impact would occur or reasonable assurance that the impact would not occur. FWP assessed the growth-inducing or growth-inhibiting aspects of the impact; the importance to the state and to society of the environmental resource or value affected; any precedent that would be set as a result of an impact of the proposed action that would commit FWP to future actions; and potential conflicts with local, federal, or state laws. As this EA revealed no significant impacts from the proposed actions, an EA is the appropriate level of review, and an EIS is not required.

2. Person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Tony Powell
Region 1 Fishing Access Site Manager
490 Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
tpowell@mt.gov
(406) 751-5423

Andrea Darling
FWP EA Contractor
39 Big Dipper Drive
Montana City, MT 59634
apdarling@gmail.com
(406) 994-6987

3. List of agencies or offices consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Design and Construction
- Lands Unit
- Legal Unit
- Fisheries Division
- Wildlife Division

Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)
Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

APPENDICES

A. MCA 23-1-110 Qualification Checklist
B. Native Species Report – Montana Natural Heritage Program
C. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
D. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks – Best Management Practices
E. State Historic Preservation Office Concurrence

APPENDIX A

23-1-110 MCA PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date: February 3, 2015 **Person Reviewing:** Andrea Darling

Project Location: Teakettle FAS is located along the Flathead River in the town of Columbia Falls on Highway 2 in Flathead County. The land is located in Section 16, Township 30 North, Range 20 West.

Description of Proposed Work: The 3-acre Teakettle Fishing Access Site (FAS) has been a popular recreational site since its acquisition by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) in 1975. FWP proposes to expand and improve the existing parking areas, develop a new drive lane, install barrier rock to control vehicle movement, and install fencing to define the parking area.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed action or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check all that apply and comment as necessary.)

[X] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments: The new drive lane and expanded parking area would be built over undeveloped, though disturbed, land.

[ ] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: No new construction.

[X] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments: Yes, for the expanded parking area and new drive lane..

[X] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments: The expanded parking area would increase day use parking capacity and would be constructed over undeveloped, though highly disturbed, land.

[ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments: No.

[ ] F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments: No

[ ] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments: No.

[ ] H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments: No.

[ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments: No campsites would be constructed.

[ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern, including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments: The proposed action would improve parking facilities and vehicle use on the FAS.

APPENDIX B

NATIVE SPECIES REPORT
MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM
Sensitive Plants and Animals in the Vicinity of Teakettle Fishing Access Site

Species of Concern Terms and Definitions

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) element occurrence database (http://nris.mt.gov) indicates two occurrences of animal species listed as threatened or endangered by the USFWS within the vicinity of the proposed project, including bull trout (listed as threatened by the USFWS and USFS and Special Status by Bureau of Land Management (BLM)) and grizzly bear (listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and USFS and Sensitive by BLM). No occurrences of plant species listed as threatened or endangered were observed in the vicinity of Teakettle FAS. The search by MNHP indicated that other Montana animal Species of Concern have been observed in the vicinity of the proposed project, including: western toad, great blue heron, golden eagle, westslope cutthroat trout, pygmy whitefish, little brown myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat, fisher, and bat roost. The search by MNHP also indicated that Montana plant Species of Concern have been observed in the vicinity of the proposed project, including: aloina moss, amblyodon moss, callicladium moss, black golf club moss, latah tule pea, northern buttercup, deer Indian paintbrush, small yellow lady's slipper, and maidenhair spleenwort.

Montana Species of Concern. The term **"Species of Concern"** includes taxa that are at-risk or potentially at-risk due to rarity, restricted distribution, habitat loss, and/or other factors. The term also encompasses species that have a special designation by organizations or land management agencies in Montana, including: Bureau of Land Management Special Status and Watch species; U.S. Forest Service Sensitive and Watch species; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Threatened, Endangered and Candidate species.

Status Ranks (Global and State)

The international network of Natural Heritage Programs employs a standardized ranking system to denote global (**G** -- range-wide) and state status (**S**) (Nature Serve 2003). Species are assigned numeric ranks ranging from 1 (critically imperiled) to 5 (demonstrably secure), reflecting the relative degree to which they are "at-risk". Rank definitions are given below. A number of factors are considered in assigning ranks -- the number, size and distribution of known "occurrences" or populations, population trends (if known), habitat sensitivity, and threat. Factors in a species' life history that make it especially vulnerable are also considered (e.g., dependence on a specific
Pollinator).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Endangered Species Act)- Terms and Definitions

LE. Listed endangered: Any species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

LT. Listed threatened: Any species likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

C. Candidate: Those taxa for which sufficient information on biological status and threats exists to propose to list them as threatened or endangered.

DM. Recovered, delisted, and being monitored - Any previously listed species that is now recovered, has been delisted, and is being monitored.

BGEPA. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (BGEPA) prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from taking bald or golden eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. The BGEPA provides criminal and civil penalties for persons who take, possess, sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import, at any time or any manner, any bald eagle ... [or any golden eagle], alive or dead, or any part, nest, or egg thereof.

MBTA. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) implements four treaties that provide for international protection of migratory birds. The statute's language is clear that actions resulting in a "taking" or possession (permanent or temporary) of a protected species are a violation of the MBTA.

BCC. Birds of Conservation Concern 2008. The 1988 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act mandates the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act

Status Ranks	
Code	**Definition**
G1 **S1**	At high risk because of extremely limited and/or rapidly declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it highly vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
G2 **S2**	At risk because of very limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state.
G3 **S3**	Potentially at risk because of limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.
G4 **S4**	Uncommon but not rare (although it may be rare in parts of its range), and usually widespread. Apparently not vulnerable in most of its range, but possibly cause for long-term concern.
G5 **S5**	Common, widespread, and abundant (although it may be rare in parts of its range). Not vulnerable in most of its range.

MFWP Conservation Need. Under Montana's Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy of 2005, individual animal species are assigned levels of conservation need as follows:

Tier I. Greatest conservation need. Montana FWP has a clear obligation to use its resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these species, communities and focus areas.

Tier II. Moderate conservation need. Montana FWP could use its resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these species communities and focus areas.

Tier III. Lower conservation need. Although important to Montana's wildlife diversity, these species, communities and focus areas are either abundant or widespread or are believed to have adequate conservation already in place.

Tier IV. Species that are nonnative, incidental or on the periphery of their range and are either expanding or very common in adjacent states.

SENSITIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN THE VICINITY OF TEAKETTLE FISHING ACCESS SITE

1. Anaxyrus boreas (Western Toad)

Vertebrate animal- Amphibian — *Habitat: Wetlands, floodplain pools*

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **S2**
Global: **G4**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service**: Sensitive**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: **1**

Element Occurrence data was reported of western toad within two miles of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1994.

2. Ardea herodias (Great Blue Heron)

Vertebrate animal- Bird — *Habitat: Riparian forest*

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **S3**
Global: **G5**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service**:**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier: **3**

Element Occurrence data was reported of great blue heron within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1991.

3. Aquila chrysaetos (Golden Eagle)

Vertebrate animal- Bird — *Habitat: Grasslands*

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **S3**
Global: **G5**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: **BGEPA; MBTA; BCC**
U.S. Forest Service**:**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: **2**

Element Occurrence data was reported of golden eagle within two miles of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 2009

4. Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi (Westslope Cutthroat Trout)

Vertebrate animal- Fish — *Habitat: Mountain streams, rivers, and lakes*

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **S2**
Global: **G4T3**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service: **Sensitive**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: **1**

Element Occurrence data was reported of westslope cutthroat trout within the project area. No observation date was recorded.

5. Prosopium coulteri (Pygmy Whitefish)

Vertebrate animal- Fish — *Habitat: Deep cold lakes*

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **S3**
Global: **G5**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service**:**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier: **3**

Element Occurrence data was reported of pygmy whitefish within the project area. No observation date was recorded.

6. Salvelinus confluentus lewisi (Bull Trout)

Vertebrate animal- Fish — *Habitat: Mountain streams, rivers, and lakes*

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **S2**
Global: **G4**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: **LT**
U.S. Forest Service: **Threatened**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Special Status**

FWP CFWCS Tier: **1**

Element Occurrence data was reported of bull trout within the project area. No observation date was recorded.

7. Myotis lucifungus (Little Brown Myotis)

Vertebrate animal- Mammal — *Habitat: Generalist*

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **S3**
Global: **G3**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service**:**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier: **3**

Element Occurrence data was reported of little brown myotis within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1895.

8. Corynorhinus townsendii (Townsend's Big-eared Bat)

Vertebrate animal- Mammal — *Habitat: Caves in forested habitats*

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **S3**
Global: **G3G4**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service**: Sensitive**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: **1**

Element Occurrence data was reported of Townsend's big-eared bat within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 2012.

9. Ursus arctos (Grizzly Bear)

Vertebrate animal- Mammal — *Habitat: Conifer Forest*

Natural Heritage Ranks — Federal Agency Status:

State: **S2S3**
Global: **G4**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: **LT, XN**
U.S. Forest Service**: Threatened**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: **1**

Element Occurrence data was reported of grizzly bear within two miles of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 2013.

10. Martes pennanti (Fisher)

Vertebrate animal- Mammal

Habitat: Mixed conifer forest

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **S3**
Global: **G5**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service**: Sensitive**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier: **2**

Element Occurrence data was reported of fisher within two miles of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 2011.

11. Bat Roost (Bat Roost)

Other

Habitat:

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **SNR**
Global: **GNR**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service**:**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier:

Element Occurrence data was reported of bat roost within two miles of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 2011.

12. Aloina brevirostris (Aloina Moss)

Bryophytes

Habitat:

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **S1**
Global: **G3G5**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service**:**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier:

Element Occurrence data was reported of Aloina moss within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1896.

13. Amblyodon dealbatus (Amblyodon Moss)

Bryophytes

Habitat:

Natural Heritage Ranks
State: **SH**
Global: **G3G5**

Federal Agency Status:
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:
U.S. Forest Service**:**
U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier:

Element Occurrence data was reported of Amblyodon moss within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1895.

14. Callicladium haldanianum (Callicladium Moss)

Bryophytes — *Habitat:*

Natural Heritage Ranks — Federal Agency Status:

State: **SH** — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Global: **G5** — U.S. Forest Service**:**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier:

Element Occurrence data was reported of Callicladium moss within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1895.

15. Catoscopium nigritum (Black Golf Club Moss)

Bryophytes — *Habitat:*

Natural Heritage Ranks — Federal Agency Status:

State: **S1** — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Global: **G4G5** — U.S. Forest Service**:**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier:

Element Occurrence data was reported of black golf club moss within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1896.

16. Lathyrus bijugatus (Latah Tule Pea)

Vascular Plants — *Habitat: Forest (Open/Valley)*

Natural Heritage Ranks — Federal Agency Status:

State: **S2S3** — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Global: **G4** — U.S. Forest Service**: Sensitive**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier:

Element Occurrence data was reported of Latah tule pea within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1898.

17. Ranunculus pedatifidus (Northern Buttercup)

Vascular Plants — *Habitat: Meadow/Woodlands (Montane to Alpine)*

Natural Heritage Ranks — Federal Agency Status:

State: **S3** — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Global: **G5** — U.S. Forest Service**:**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management: **Sensitive**

FWP CFWCS Tier:

Element Occurrence data was reported of northern buttercup within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1894.

18. Castilleja cervina (Deer Indian Paintbrush)

Vascular Plants — *Habitat: Wetland/Riparian*

Natural Heritage Ranks — Federal Agency Status:

State: **SH** — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Global: **G4** — U.S. Forest Service**:**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier:

Element Occurrence data was reported of deer Indian paintbrush within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1894.

19. Cypripedium parviflorum (Small Yellow Lady's-slipper)

Vascular Plants — *Habitat:*

Natural Heritage Ranks — Federal Agency Status:

State: **S3S4** — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Global: **G5** — U.S. Forest Service**: Sensitive**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier:

Element Occurrence data was reported of small yellow lady's-slipper within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1895.

20. Asplenium trichomanes (Maidenhair Spleenwort)

Vascular Plants — *Habitat: Rock/Talus*

Natural Heritage Ranks — Federal Agency Status:

State: **SH** — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Global: **G5** — U.S. Forest Service**:**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management:

FWP CFWCS Tier:

Element Occurrence data was reported of maidenhair spleenwort within one mile of the project area. Last recorded observation date was 1895.

APPENDIX C

TOURISM REPORT

MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Carol Crockett, Grant Manager
Montana Office of Tourism -Department of Commerce
301 S. Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

Project Name: Teakettle Fishing Access Site Proposed Improvement Project

Project Description: The 3-acre Teakettle Fishing Access Site (FAS) has been a popular recreational site since its acquisition by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) in 1975. FWP proposes to expand and improve the existing parking areas, develop a new drive lane, install barrier rock to control vehicle movement, and install fencing to define the parking area.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
   NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, this project has the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation industry economy if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
   NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to improve quality and quantity of tourism and recreational opportunities if properly maintained. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

Signature Carol Crockett, Grant Manager Date January 12, 2015

APPENDIX D
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
10-02-02
Updated May 1, 2008

I. ROADS

A. Road Planning and location

1. Minimize the number of roads constructed at the FAS through comprehensive road planning, recognizing foreseeable future uses.
    a. Use existing roads, unless use of such roads would cause or aggravate an erosion problem.
2. Fit the road to the topography by locating roads on natural benches and following natural contours. Avoid long, steep road grades and narrow canyons.
3. Locate roads on stable geology, including well-drained soils and rock formations that tend to dip into the slope. Avoid slumps and slide-prone areas characterized by steep slopes, highly weathered bedrock, clay beds, concave slopes, hummocky topography, and rock layers that dip parallel to the slope. Avoid wet areas, including seeps, wetlands, wet meadows, and natural drainage channels.
4. Minimize the number of stream crossings.
    a. Choose stable stream crossing sites. "Stable" refers to streambanks with erosion-resistant materials and in hydrologically safe spots.

B. <u>Road Design</u>

1. Design roads to the minimum standard necessary to accommodate anticipated use and equipment. The need for higher engineering standards can be alleviated through proper road-use management. "Standard" refers to road width.
2. Design roads to minimize disruption of natural drainage patterns. Vary road grades to reduce concentrated flow in road drainage ditches, culverts, and on fill slopes and road surfaces.

C. <u>Drainage from Road Surface</u>

1. Provide adequate drainage from the surface of all permanent and temporary roads. Use outsloped, insloped or crowned roads, installing proper drainage features. Space road drainage features so peak flow on road surface or in ditches will not exceed their capacity.
    a. Outsloped roads provide means of dispersing water in a low-energy flow from the road surface. Outsloped roads are appropriate when fill slopes are stable, drainage will not flow directly into stream channels, and transportation safety can be met.
    b. For insloped roads, plan ditch gradients steep enough, generally greater than 2%, but less than 8%, to prevent sediment deposition and ditch erosion. The steeper gradients may be suitable for more stable soils; use the lower gradients for less stable soils.
    c. Design and install road surface drainage features at adequate spacing to control erosion; steeper gradients require more frequent drainage features.

Properly constructed drain dips can be an economical method of road surface drainage. Construct drain dips deep enough into the sub-grade so that traffic will not obliterate them.

2. For ditch relief/culverts, construct stable catch basins at stable angles. Protect the inflow end of cross-drain culverts from plugging and armor if in erodible soil. Skewing ditch relief culverts 20 to 30 degrees toward the inflow from the ditch will improve inlet efficiency.
3. Provide energy dissipators (rock piles, slash, log chunks, etc.) where necessary to reduce erosion at outlet of drainage features. Cross-drains, culverts, water bars, dips, and other drainage structures should not discharge onto erodible soils or fill slopes without outfall protection.
4. Route road drainage through adequate filtration zones, or other sediment-settling structures. Install road drainage features above stream crossings to route discharge into filtration zones before entering a stream.

D. Construction/Reconstruction

1. Stabilize erodible, exposed soils by seeding, compacting, riprapping, benching, mulching, or other suitable means.
2. At the toe of potentially erodible fill slopes, particularly near stream channels, pile slash in a row parallel to the road to trap sediment. When done concurrently with road construction, this is one method to effectively control sediment movement and it also provides an economical way of disposing of roadway slash. Limit the height, width and length of these "slash filter windrows" so not to impede wildlife movement. Sediment fabric fences or other methods may be used if effective.
3. Construct cut and fill slopes at stable angles to prevent sloughing and subsequent erosion.
4. Avoid incorporating potentially unstable woody debris in the fill portion of the road prism. Where possible, leave existing rooted trees or shrubs at the toe of the fill slope to stabilize the fill.
5. Place debris, overburden, and other waste materials associated with construction and maintenance activities in a location to avoid entry into streams. Include these waste areas in soil stabilization planning for the road.
6. When using existing roads, reconstruct only to the extent necessary to provide adequate drainage and safety; avoid disturbing stable road surfaces. Consider abandoning existing roads when their use would aggravate erosion.

E. Road Maintenance

1. Grade road surfaces only as often as necessary to maintain a stable running surface and to retain the original surface drainage.
2. Maintain erosion control features through periodic inspection and maintenance, including cleaning dips and cross-drains, repairing ditches, marking culvert inlets to aid in location, and clearing debris from culverts.
3. Avoid cutting the toe of cut slopes when grading roads, pulling ditches, or plowing snow.
4. Avoid using roads during wet periods if such use would likely damage the road

drainage features. Consider gates, barricades or signs to limit use of roads during wet periods.

II. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (parking areas, campsites, trails, ramps, restrooms)

A. Site Design

1. Design a site that best fits the topography, soil type, and stream character, while minimizing soil disturbance and economically accomplishing recreational objectives. Keep roads and parking lots at least 50 feet from water; if closer, mitigate with vegetative buffers as necessary.
2. Locate foot trails to avoid concentrating runoff and provide breaks in grade as needed. Locate trails and parking areas away from natural drainage systems and divert runoff to stable areas. Limit the grade of trails on unstable, saturated, highly erosive, or easily compacted soils
3. Scale the number of boat ramps, campsites, parking areas, bathroom facilities, etc. to be commensurate with existing and anticipated needs. Facilities should not invite such use that natural features will be degraded.
4. Provide adequate barriers to minimize off-road vehicle use

B. Maintenance: Soil Disturbance and Drainage

1. Maintenance operations minimize soil disturbance around parking lots, swimming areas and campsites, through proper placement and dispersal of such facilities or by reseeding disturbed ground. Drainage from such facilities should be promoted through proper grading.
2. Maintain adequate drainage for ramps by keeping side drains functional or by maintaining drainage of road surface above ramps or by crowning (on natural surfaces).
3. Maintain adequate drainage for trails. Use mitigating measures, such as water bars, wood chips, and grass seeding, to reduce erosion on trails.
4. When roads are abandoned during reconstruction or to implement site-control, they must be reseeded and provided with adequate drainage so that periodic maintenance is not required.

III. RAMPS AND STREAM CROSSINGS

A. Legal Requirements

1. Relevant permits must be obtained prior to building bridges across streams or boat ramps. Such permits include the SPA 124 permit, the COE 404 permit, and the DNRC Floodplain Development Permit.

B. Design Considerations

1. Placement of boat ramp should be such that boats can load and unload with out difficulty and the notch in the bank where the ramp was placed does not encourage bank erosion. Extensions of boat ramps beyond the natural bank can also encourage erosion.
2. Adjust the road grade or provide drainage features (e.g. rubber flaps) to reduce the concentration of road drainage to stream crossings and boat ramps. Direct drainage flow through an adequate filtration zone and away from the ramp or

crossing through the use of gravel side-drains, crowning (on natural surfaces) or 30-degree angled grooves on concrete ramps.

3. Avoid unimproved stream crossings on permanent streams. On ephemeral streams, when a culvert or bridge is not feasible, locate drive-throughs on a stable, rocky portion of the stream channel.
4. Unimproved (non-concrete) ramps should only be used when the native soils are sufficiently gravelly or rocky to withstand the use at the site and to resist erosion.

C. Installation of Stream Crossings and Ramps

1. Minimize stream channel disturbances and related sediment problems during construction of road and installation of stream crossing structures. Do not place erodible material into stream channels. Remove stockpiled material from high water zones. Locate temporary construction bypass roads in locations where the stream course will have a minimal disturbance. Time the construction activities to protect fisheries and water quality.
2. Where ramps enter the stream channel, they should follow the natural streambed in order to avoid changing stream hydraulics and to optimize use of boat trailers.
3. Use culverts with a minimum diameter of 15 inches for permanent stream crossings and cross drains. Proper sizing of culverts may dictate a larger pipe and should be based on a 50-year flow recurrence interval. Install culverts to conform to the natural streambed and slope on all perennial streams and on intermittent streams that support fish or that provide seasonal fish passage. Place culverts slightly below normal stream grade to avoid culvert outfall barriers. Do not alter stream channels upstream from culverts, unless necessary to protect fill or to prevent culvert blockage. Armor the inlet and/or outlet with rock or other suitable material where needed.
4. Prevent erosion of boat ramps and the affected streambank through proper placement (so as to not catch the stream current) and hardening (riprap or erosion resistant woody vegetation).
5. Maintain a 1-foot minimum cover for culverts 18-36 inches in diameter, and a cover of one-third diameter for larger culverts to prevent crushing by traffic.

APPENDIX E
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE CONCURRENCE

Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.
Montana Historical Society

Historic Preservation
Museum
Outreach & Interpretation
Publications
Research Center

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FEB 26 2014
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
DEPT. OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

February 25, 2014

Mr. Bardell Mangum, Landscape Architect
Design & Construction Bureau
Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
1522 9th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-0701

RE: FWP FY 2013-2014 Fishing Access Site Capital Improvement Projects

Dear Mr. Mangum:

Thank you for the letter (received January 31, 2014) regarding the Fiscal Year 2013 – 2014 Fishing Access Site Capital Improvement Projects. Based on the receive documentation, we feel the following actions will require additional consultation:

FWP File #505.5	Kelly Island FAS	T13N R20W S26	Missoula County
FWP File #274B.1	Darby Bridge FAS	T3N R21W S14	Ravalli County
FWP File #677.1	Paradise FAS	T5S R9E S8	Park County
FWP File #307.2	Emigrant FAS	T5S R8E S27	Park County
FWP File #25A.1	Aspen Trails FAS	T10N R3W S9	Lewis & Clark County
FWP File #184.1	Carroll Trail FAS	T15N R18E S9	Fergus County
FWP File #685.2	Pelican FAS	T1S R16E S8	Sweet Grass County
FWP File #231.2	Cliff Swallow FAS	T4S R17E S4	Stillwater County
FWP File #865.1	South Sandstone FAS	T7N R58E S29	Fallon County

We concur that the following actions have a low likelihood of an adverse effect to heritage resources:

FWP File #857.1	Somers FAS	T27N R21W S26	Flathead County
FWP File #915.2	Teakettle FAS	T30N R20W S16	Flathead County
FWP File # 521B.1	Kookoosint FAS	T18N R24W S6	Sanders County
FWP File #599B.1	McWenneger Slough FAS	T28N R21W S1	Flathead County
FWP File #60.1	Bell Crossing FAS	T8N R20W S17	Ravalli County
FWP File #535.1	Loch Leven FAS	T5S R9E S28	Park County
FWP File #430.1	Harrison Lake FAS	T1S R1W S34; T2W R1W S3	Madison County
FWP File #601.2	Medicine River FAS	T21N R1W S34	Cascade County
FWP File #995.1	Whitebird FAS	T3S R19E S14	Stillwater County
FWP File #121.1	Bratten FAS	T1S R17E S23	Sweet Grass County
FWP File #1002.2	Whitetail Reservoir FAS	T36N R50E S10	Daniels County
FWP File #318.1	Faber Reservoir FAS	T29N R20E S21	Blaine County

Please note that our concurrence does not substitute for a good faith effort to consult with interested parties, local government authorities, and American Indian Tribes. If you receive a comment that substantially relates to a heritage property located within or adjacent to one of the above actions, please forward it to our office for review. Include documentation of how the comment was addressed.

File: FWP/Fish – 2014 – 2014013120

225 North Roberts Street
P.O. Box 201201
Helena, MT 59620-1201
(406) 444-2694
(406) 444-2696 FAX
montanahistoricalsociety.org

If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact me at (406) 444-0388 or kore@mt.gov. Thank you for consulting with us.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Ore
Review and Compliance Officer
Montana State Historic Preservation Office

File: FWP/Fish – 2014 – 2014013120